

My soul, there is a country  
Far beyond the stars,  
Where stands a winged sentry  
All skillful in the wars:  
There above noise and danger,  
Sweet Peace is crown'd with smiles,  
And One born in a manger  
Commands the beauteous files.

Henry Vaughn in 1650 wrote those words in his poem titled "Peace."

Mr. President, I wish everyone in our Nation and everyone in our Nation's service around the globe a beautiful and peaceful Christmas season. Whenever the demands of the Nation may send you, in your hearts and in your memories you can hear the music and relive the family traditions that make Christmas so very, very special.

As this year closes and a new year dawns, we are filled with kind thoughts and bold resolutions. For some, it would be a time also filled with a certain buyer's remorse, as the Christmas bills come due. For others, New Year's resolutions will lead them into gymnasiums in fresh attempts to exercise and work off rich Christmas cookies and cakes. I applaud everyone with such determination. Each new year is a new chance to address our pressing individual issues, be they health related or economic.

The new Congress must also be filled with resolve—resolve to respond to the clear messages sent by the people of the United States. We will have much work to do if we are to successfully deal with the situation in the Middle East, the mounting national deficit at home, the rising costs of health care, and myriad other problems. Our resolve must last longer than most introductory gymnasium memberships if we are to set our national house in order.

In January, Lord willing, I will begin my ninth term as a United States Senator from the beautiful State of West Virginia, whose motto is "Mountaineers are always free." I have been here long enough to know that we have done it before, and we can do it again. I again thank the people of West Virginia for their votes of confidence in me, ROBERT C. BYRD, to continue in their service.

Mr. President, I close with a favorite poem of mine by James Henry Leigh Hunt, who lived from 1784 to 1859. This is a poem familiar to all of us, to me from my very earliest days in a little two-room schoolhouse. This favorite poem of mine by James Henry Leigh Hunt is entitled "Abou Ben Adhem." During the Christmas season, and especially as we brave the crowds and the traffic at the shopping malls and in the grocery stores, it is good to remember that the true message of the season is to love the Lord and to love our fellow men.

"Abou Ben Adhem":

Abou Ben Adhem (may his tribe increase!)  
Awoke one night from a deep dream of peace,  
And saw, within the moonlight in his room,  
Making it rich, and like a lily in bloom,  
An Angel writing in a book of gold:  
Exceeding peace had made Ben Adhem bold,  
And to the Presence in the room he said,

"What writest thou?" The Vision raised its head,  
And with a look made of all sweet accord

Answered, "The names of those who love the Lord."

"And is mine one?" said Abou. "Nay, not so,"

Replied the Angel. Abou spoke more low,  
But cheerily still; and said, "I pray thee, then,

Write me as one who loves his fellow men."

The Angel wrote, and vanished. The next night

It came again with a great wakening light,  
And showed the names whom love of God had blessed,

And, lo! Ben Adhem's name led all the rest!

Mr. President, I wish you and I wish all Senators and all peoples everywhere a very merry and peaceful and pleasant and memorable Christmas.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, I say to my neighbor in West Virginia, my friend and my colleague, first of all, that the poem he just recited is one that my wife Frances and I learned in the seventh grade in Yellow Springs. The Senator reciting it brings back very good memories, not only of the poem but of being in the seventh grade with my friends.

There will be many things about this Senate that I will miss, and certainly one that I will miss is having the opportunity to sit here and to listen to my colleague from West Virginia as he speaks. It is a great privilege. It is a great thrill.

I must tell him, however, that there is C-SPAN in Cedarville, OH. I suspect the library does get the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD at Cedarville College and other places, so I will have the opportunity to listen to him and read what he has to say. He is a great treasure of this Senate.

I might also tell my colleague, as I told him personally yesterday, that I will carry around with me and keep with me and prize the small Constitution that I know is in his pocket right now that he gave me. I deeply appreciate that. And I know he gave one to the Presiding Officer as well.

One of the first things I did when I came to the Senate in January of 1995 was walk across the hall to see Senator BYRD. Senator BYRD was kind enough to give me his "History of the Senate." I have cherished that, have read it. That will be going back with Frances and myself to Ohio. If I do, I say to my colleague from West Virginia, do what I hope to do—do a little teaching at the college level—I am sure those books will certainly come in very handy.

I thank my colleague for his friendship and for his great service now beginning this January his ninth term in the Senate.

One final note. I will tell my colleague, and I don't know if I have told him this, but my son and my daughter-in-law and our new granddaughter now live in West Virginia, so they are constituents of my colleague.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, will the distinguished Senator yield?

Mr. DEWINE. I am pleased to yield.

Mr. BYRD. I thank this friend of West Virginia, this friend of mine. I shall always remember as long as I live—however long that may be—I shall carry in my heart a very warm feeling for him. He is our neighbor. He represents the people of Ohio, our neighbor to the west of the West Virginia hills. I thank him for his friendship and for his services to his people. His people are my people. I wish him well in the days and years ahead wherever he may serve. May God always bless you, my friend, and may He always keep you in the palm of His hand.

Mr. DEWINE. I thank my colleague for his very generous and kind comments. One final comment to say that it was his great leadership, along with the great leadership of Senator MCCAIN and others, which allowed us—group is the word I would prefer—a group of 14 Senators to make an agreement that I think was in the best interests of the Senate, and it has proved to be in the best interests of the Senate, in regard to our judges and how we confirm them. It has worked so far. My wish for you and my other colleagues as you go on is that you will continue to keep that agreement and it will continue to work. That is my wish.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I thank the able Senator. I shall do my best to help fulfill his confidence and wishes.

#### HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

SERGEANT DANIEL MICHAEL SHEPHERD

Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to a courageous young man, who dedicated his life to defending the freedom of others. Army SGT Daniel Michael Shepherd of Elyria, OH was killed in Iraq on August 15, 2004, when his vehicle was struck by a bomb. He was only 23 years old.

Daniel—fondly referred to as "Danny" by his family and friends—was deployed to support Operation Iraqi Freedom in September 2003, after being stationed at Fort Riley in Kansas. Danny joined the military in 2000, upon his graduation from high school. A courageous member of the 1st Battalion, 16th infantry regiment, 1st Brigade, Danny was remembered as a committed soldier and loyal friend.

His platoon SGT Ron Tulanowski remembers Danny's reliability and bravery when the Sergeant's armored vehicle was hit by a grenade. In describing Danny's heroism, the Sergeant said that "he probably saved my life the day I got hit." Danny was more concerned for the lives of others than he was for his own. I can think of nothing more honorable.

Danny attended Columbia High School where he played center and tight end on the school's football team. He was known as a great athlete and devoted team player. According to Ray Anthony, the Columbia Township Fire Chief, "Danny was like the big brother

of the football team." One of Danny's former teammates Mike Banyasz also recalled how helpful he was to all his teammates. "He was starting center and I was backup center," he said.

By the third game, he moved to tight end, and I became starting center. He helped me out a lot. He was a big reason I became the starter.

Clearly, Danny believed in the value of teamwork. His willingness to always help others be their best made him a truly excellent soldier.

It was also in high school, Mr. President, that Danny met his future wife Kassie for whom he cared deeply. While Danny was in Iraq, Kassie waited anxiously for him at home; she missed her husband terribly.

Kassie gave birth to their son, Daniel A. Shepherd, while Danny was deployed in Iraq. Daniel was born on St. Patrick's Day and according to family members and friends, looks just like his father. Danny was scheduled to return from Iraq a week after he died. He was looking forward to meeting his son for the first time. When Danny died, his son was only six months old.

Recognized for his unrelenting drive, Danny simply had a passion for public service. He attended law enforcement classes at Lorain County Joint Vocational School and planned on contributing to the safety of his community by becoming a police officer upon his return from Iraq. And according to his grandmother Celia, "Danny understood the value of education and planned on attending college upon his return."

Friends and family members were inspired by Danny's motivation and positive attitude. He went about his busy and stressful days with an infectious smile on his face. Danny's former teammate Chris Horn said:

Danny's daily schedule was always hectic, yet I never heard him gripe or complain.

Indeed, Danny's optimism shined through to his peers as he worked to reach his goals. According to Chris, Danny "seemed like he knew what he wanted to do from the get-go. He said he wanted to be in the military and then when he got out, he wanted to become a cop."

Danny's family and friends are frequently reminded of his character, reliability, and willingness to help others. Roger Pace—the minister at Broadview Road Church who delivered Danny's eulogy—said that "the Army calls such people leaders, regardless of rank." Indeed, Danny Shepherd epitomizes the definition of leadership.

SGT Andrew Ritchie of New York—who had served in an earlier deployment with Danny—reiterated this characteristic. This is what he said:

Shepherd was one of the best people I ever had the chance to meet and serve with in the Army. . . . He always did [his job] to the best of his ability. He would always stop to help somebody else out when they needed it. All I can really say is he was a great person.

Danny will leave a lasting impact on everyone he met. His former next door neighbor, Jennifer, reflected upon the

sadness she felt when she heard of his death. She wrote the following on an Internet tribute webpage:

So much pain rushed through me all at once because I knew that I would never get to see 'the boy next door' again. The pain did not last too long, though, because I soon realized that though Danny's physical presence will no longer be there, his love and memories will never falter.

Mr. President, Danny Shepherd's heroic actions and service to our country will be honored and remembered long after his death. His optimism will continue to inspire those who knew and loved him.

My wife Fran and I continue to keep Danny's family—his wife Kassie, their son Daniel, and Danny's parents Karen and Daniel—in our thoughts and prayers.

#### PRIVATE FIRST CLASS ADAM R. SHEPHERD

Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to Army PFC Adam R. Shepherd from Somerville, OH. On January 17, 2006, PFC Shepherd died in Iraq from an illness. He was serving with the 2nd Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, based out of Fort Campbell, KY. Adam was 21 years old.

Adam leaves his mother and step-father Susan and Mark Miller, his father Roger Shepherd, and his brothers Marcus Miller, Elijah Miller, and Army SPC Joshua Shepherd, who also is serving with the 2nd Brigade.

Adam was born in Cincinnati on Christmas Day 1984. Growing up, he attended Preble Shawnee High School until he transferred to the Life Skills Center for his senior year. He graduated in 2002, and enlisted in the Army in January 2003. As an infantryman, Adam's relatives say that his superiors in the Army regularly praised him for his positive attitude and for always volunteering for dangerous duties.

Hector Santiago, one of Adam's school teachers, remembers him as a "very good student. . . . He was an even-keeled, happy-go-lucky type of guy," he said. Those who grew up with Adam remember him as a real jokester. He always had something funny to say and was always trying to make his friends smile. For many, he was simply a ray of sunshine in their lives. As one of his friends, J.J. Green, said, "We had a blast every time we got together. He was always the generous, happy person in our group of friends. I will miss him forever."

Adam will also be remembered for his politeness and compassion. He was the type of person who was always looking to make new friends. Janeese Martin wrote the following on an Internet tribute webpage in Adam's honor:

I was very shocked and saddened to hear of Adam's death. He was a very wonderful person. He befriended me when I moved to Preble Shawnee—no questions asked. I was very proud of him when I heard that he served his country.

Adam's sense of humor and ability to make others laugh followed him to Iraq, where his fellow soldiers found in

him a good friend—someone who could brighten any day. SGT T. Gonzales left Adam's family the following message in tribute to Adam:

I was fortunate to make the acquaintance of this fine soldier, as well as that of his brother. . . . during the first trip to Iraq in 2003 to 2004. Adam was always one with jokes in his mind and has shown me the lighter side of life. . . . He will be greatly missed! My heart, prayers, and thoughts go with all of you.

PFC Dennis Bluhm had this to say about his friend:

[O]ne thing I can tell you is that Adam made an impact on everyone he talked to. He has always been able to find a way to make someone laugh, even when they wanted to cry. He was one of the BEST friends that anyone could ever have the privilege of growing up next door to. Adam is not gone—he lives on in all of our memories, and with a guy like him. . . . he will definitely not be forgotten.

Adam was a loving son and brother. His family dearly misses him. As his mother Susan said, "I have four children—four boys—and a quarter of my heart is gone."

Adam's Aunt Ruth wrote the following about her nephew:

Today is Valentine's Day—a time to remember those who you love. I love Adam. I always will. He brings a smile to my face everyday when I think of him. He was such a sweet boy who turned into such a fine young man. My heart goes out to his mother, who will always be my friend and sister. . . . I recall the saying, 'It matters not how much we love, but how much we are loved.' And Adam was so very loved—till we meet again, Adam.

Adam will always be remembered for his warm, beaming smile. From the day he was born, as his Aunt Rose remembers that his smile just stood out—that it was truly unforgettable.

Adam was proud that he fulfilled his dream of becoming a soldier and serving our Nation. He was brave and dedicated. His service to our country has earned him several awards, including the Army Good Conduct Medal, the Army Service Ribbon, the Combat Infantryman Badge, the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, and the National Defense Medal.

When I think of young men like Adam, I am reminded of the words of President John F. Kennedy. This is what he said:

Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe, to assure the survival and the success of liberty.

Without question, Adam served his country bravely to help ensure the success of liberty. He was a man of courage and loyalty, devoted to his family, his fellow soldiers, and his country. But what's more, Adam served cheerfully, and with a smile. Army PFC Adam Shepherd will never be forgotten.

My wife Fran and I continue to keep Adam's friends and family in our thoughts and prayers.

LANCE CORPORAL DANIEL NATHAN DEYARMIN

Mr. President, I rise today to remember and honor a fellow Ohioan—Marine LCpl Daniel Nathan Deyarmin, Jr., from Tallmadge. Lance Corporal Deyarmin was killed on August 1, 2005, during combat operations in Iraq. Just two days before his death, he celebrated his 22nd birthday. He is survived by his parents Edie and Daniel Deyarmin Sr., and by his sister Erica.

To friends and family, Lance Corporal Deyarmin was known simply as “Nate.” Born in Tallmadge, he lived there his whole life and loved to dress in cowboy outfits and tinker with old cars. Kind-hearted and easy-going, he was also a consummate prankster. Once, after cleaning his room under orders, he then painted the following words on the ceiling—“I got even!”

Nate’s mother remembers that he could make anything fun. Even when he was in trouble, his parents simply couldn’t stay mad at him. It would never be long until they were all laughing together.

His friends recall that Nate was friendly with everyone he met. He was simply one of the guys, whether they were hunting, playing football or soccer, wrestling, or working on stock cars. Nate graduated in 2002 from Tallmadge High School, where he was a member of the football team.

Don Duffy was his school counselor for four years at Tallmadge High and remembers talking with the young Nate about his interest in the military. He describes Nate as “soft-spoken [and] polite,” a good student who was well-liked by his fellow classmates.

Nate enlisted in the Marines in January 2003, one of five members of his unit who graduated from the Tallmadge public schools. The group spoke twice to students at Tallmadge Middle School before shipping to Iraq in January 2005. “They felt very strongly about what they were doing,” Tallmadge teacher Carol Arbour said. “We prayed they would be coming home together.”

In Iraq, Nate became part of a special sniper unit. His mother remembers how important his fellow Marines were to him. “He loved being with the snipers,” she said. “They worked together and they meshed. They covered each other’s butts.”

Nate’s sister, Erica, also remembers his commitment to being a Marine. “He believed in his country,” she said. “He loved being a Marine.”

During phone calls home, Nate’s family had a rule that nothing negative could ever be said during their phone conversations. His parents knew that being a sniper was a difficult job, and that Nate had to stay focused and alert at all times—even if he had gone without sleep for hours on end.

Nate was enthusiastic about many things in life, but cars were his passion. He would help friends whose cars broke down in the middle of the night, and he loved to restore old cars. “That was his favorite thing to do,” Nate’s sister recalls.

Family friend Ray Kozlowski described Nate as a “horsepower enthusiast.” With his father, he would work on old cars in the garage, where they kept a dozen cars in various states of disrepair. And Nate’s friend, Eddie Papp, remembers how focused he was when working. “So many times we would be working on something, and I would want to go to bed and get some sleep, but Nate would not let me,” Eddie said. “He would make me push myself to go a little longer.”

During Nate’s funeral procession, his family drove some of his favorite cars. One of them was a 1985 Monte Carlo—a car that literally had Nate’s teething marks in the dashboard. Nate’s friend Charlie Harner has painted the words “In Loving Memory” on the deck lid of his own stock car. All of his races are dedicated to Nate.

Nate was a man who was devoted to his country, to his marines, and to his family and friends. While serving in Iraq, he would often speak with his family on the phone. Although the conversations were often emotional, he said he was proud of serving to make the country safe.

Nate’s mother remembers that her son was upbeat when he called on his 22nd birthday. “He was happy,” she said. “He was always happy.”

Nate’s death was felt by the entire Tallmadge community. He was honored by Tallmadge High School during its first football game of the 2005 season, and the sixth graders that Nate talked to at Tallmadge Middle School will always remember the day that they heard a true hero speak.

Nate was one of six men from his sniper unit to be killed on August 1, 2005. SGT Brian Casagrande served with these men. This is what he said about Nate:

Daniel ‘Nate’ Deyarmin came to us . . . from Weapons Company. He brought with him his goofy smile and upbeat spirit. His goofy exterior, which earned him the usual dose of ribbings, contained the soul of a gentle, thoughtful man. He was always willing to undertake any task set before him, and did so without complaint or hesitation. He could be found during his time off reading some kind of ‘motorhead’ magazine, and he was always talking specs about vehicles. Nate’s smile will be missed.

Nate’s memory continues to inspire others. Working together with family friend Ray Kozlowski, Nate’s mother has organized a fundraiser in her son’s honor to benefit veterans with disabilities. Fittingly, the fundraiser is based around what Nate loved most—horsepower.

On October 2, 2005, the LCpl Daniel “Nate” Deyarmin Memorial Benefit Run drew 1,500 motorcycles and 250 cars, successfully raising more than \$17,000 for the veterans. Another event was held this past summer. In the past 2 years, Nate’s mom has helped to raise over \$35,000 for veterans with disabilities.

The life and heroism of Nathan Deyarmin will never be forgotten. He was a fine man with a compassion for

life and a dedication to his family, friends, community, and country. As his mother said, “If you truly knew Nathan, you loved him.”

I would like to conclude with words that Nate, himself, wrote in the Akron Beacon Journal. The article was published on July 4th, 2005, and Nate wrote about being away from loved ones over the holiday, and what it meant to be defending his country with his fellow marines instead. These were his words:

[T]he free will to be over here and help each other is one of the hardest things in one’s life and still being able to put forth our best effort to make the best of every situation we encounter. That’s what we as Americans do. We make the best of everything. Semper Fi.

My wife Fran and I continue to keep LCpl Nathan Deyarmin’s family in our thoughts and prayers.

CORPORAL JOSEPH ANTHONY TOMCI

Mr. President, I rise today to remember a brave Ohioan who died while serving our country in Iraq. Marine Cpl Joseph Anthony Tomci died on August 2, 2006, from wounds received from an IED explosion, while conducting combat operations against enemy forces. He leaves behind his mother and step-father Gayle and Philip, his father John, and his brother Jason.

Joe—as friends and family called him—graduated from Stow-Monroe Falls High School in 2003 and immediately enlisted in the Marines. His father remembers how proud Joe was to be serving his country. “He felt that they were doing something worthwhile,” John recalled. “He loved what he was doing. As a father, that’s the highest thing that you can want for your children.”

Joe’s family and closest friends remember him as a sensitive man with a deep sense of compassion. A family friend, Susan Walker, recalls the time when a 10-year-old Joe unsuccessfully tried to nurse an abandoned mouse back to health. When the mouse died, she said, “Joseph was devastated.”

Joe was a young man with many interests. He will be remembered as a loyal friend, a comedian, and a Heineken beer drinker. He loved football and played on his high school team. Joe also loved movies and had an amazing knack for memorizing lines from his favorite flicks. He’d recite these lines while watching movies—often to the dismay of those watching alongside him.

His lifelong friend Mike Gross remembers that Joe was “the life of the party.” In Mike’s words, “It was always better when Joe was around.”

Indeed, Joe loved his friends. On his second tour in Iraq, he kept pictures of his closest buddies in his helmet. And, after receiving news of his death, more than a dozen of Joe’s friends gathered to remember the man they knew as “Joe Tom.” They were lifelong friends, who had played sports together as kids and had ridden their bikes through the streets of Stow. The even had a name for themselves—“The Organization.”

Friend, Steve Young, remembers that Joe would tell say that "he was not only serving his country, but he was serving us. He would tell us, 'I am going so you don't have to.'"

In addition to his strong sense of duty, Joe also had a remarkable sense of humor. To his friends, he was always something of a prankster. Jacob Geopfert particularly remembers one night when they were all at his family's lake house.

Without warning, their friend Nick sneezed three times in a row. Joe looked at him and yelled, "I don't get allergies, I give them." He then pushed Nick—fully clothed—into the lake. "That was Joe," Nick remembers. "That's how he was."

While serving abroad in Iraq, Joe became pen pals for a class of second graders at Fishcreek Elementary School in Stow. Teacher Tracy Piatt remembers how much corresponding with the young Marine in Iraq meant to her class. They would make birthday cards and throw parties in his honor, singing "Happy Birthday" to his picture that hung on their wall. They sent him care packages, and tracked his location in Iraq on a map.

After his first tour ended, Joe visited the class, thanking them for their thoughtful letters. As he walked to the front of the room, they stopped and stared at him with awe and admiration. Joe talked to the class about being an American and being a marine. He spoke of the importance of respect, loyalty, faith, and trust. And, he told them that their packages were one of his best motivations in Iraq, and that he would sit there reading their letters for hours.

The students in Tracy Piatt's class will miss the young man who became their marine. "He was so proud of what he was doing," Tracy tearfully remembers. "You could tell he cared about making Iraq a better place for the people there." In her words:

[Joe] was a good kid, a good young man. He just wanted to be good for people. I wish he knew how many people cared about him. He touched so many lives that he didn't even know about.

Tracy believes that having corresponded with Joe will make her students grow up to be better adults. I don't think there is anyone who could disagree with that.

Nearly 1,000 people gathered inside the Holy Family Church to pay their final respects to Joe. Standing at the front of the church were the boys and girls from Fishcreek Elementary. Their teacher Tracy spoke at the funeral. This is what she said:

As we look into the faces of these boys and girls, you're looking at Joe Tomci, for he is in their hearts, and they will carry him forever.

Also speaking at his funeral, Reverend Paul Rosing remembered Joe as a true American hero. He said:

He fits the image of a classic hero. He's tall, good-looking, and strong. He wanted to be a Marine since he was a small child, and

he went into the Marines as early as he could.

Though Joe was nearing the end of his enlistment, his father believes that his son was destined for a bright career in the military. Joe had talked about the possibility of becoming a drill instructor, feeling that his combat experience in Iraq would help him make better Marines out of new recruits. And it was Joe's nature to assume leadership positions. As his father said, "In a sense, he'd be helping others. That was kind of his life's mission."

Joe made everyone who knew him proud. His mother remembers how important being a Marine was to Joe. "He always dreamed of being a Marine," she said. "He believed his service was a benefit to the world."

This sentiment is one we hear over and over again when people talk about Joe's life. He was a caring man, someone who took his leadership responsibilities seriously. He genuinely cared about the Marines who were serving under him and worried about them often. During his last tour, he didn't call home as frequently as in the past. His mother explains that Joe said "it was because there were so many men under his care that were on their first tour of duty that he wanted to make sure they'd have the opportunity to call home. That's just how he was."

Marine Cpl Joe Tomci was a young man who genuinely loved life and had great compassion for others. His dedication to his friends, family, community, and country was unmatched. Joe is a model of what we all hope our children will become.

My wife Fran and I continue to keep his family in our thoughts and prayers.

SERGEANT GARY ANDREW ECKERT

Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to Army SGT Gary Andrew Eckert, from Sylvania, OH. On May 8, 2005, Sergeant Eckert died in Iraq when an improvised explosive device detonated near his military vehicle. He leaves behind his wife Tiphany, their daughter Marlee, and their son Myles. Sergeant Eckert is also survived by his mother Deborah, his father and stepmother Gary and Cathy, his brother Ryan, and his sisters Denise, Crystal, Jessica, Stephanie, and Alexandria. Mr. President, Sergeant Eckert was 24 years old.

Family and friends referred to Gary as Andy, short for his middle name Andrew. They will remember Andy most for his courage, compassion, and dedication to his family. He was loved by all.

Andy graduated from Anthony Wayne High School in 2000, where he played on the basketball team during his freshman and sophomore years. Andy was a gifted athlete, someone for whom sports came easily. He was a huge University of Michigan fan, but would still spend afternoons cheering on The Ohio State University Buckeyes with his friends.

That must have been an interesting time, particularly when Ohio played Michigan.

Andy was attending Owens Community College when his Army Reserves unit was called to active duty in February 2003. Without question, Andy was a dedicated soldier. When he died, he was serving his second deployment in Iraq. During his first deployment, he had sustained injuries for which he received the Purple Heart. He was a courageous young man—a true hero.

During Andy's funeral, BG Michael Beasley commented upon Andy's second deployment to Iraq. Andy didn't have to return, but he did anyway. BG Beasley reflected upon why. This is what he said:

Andy didn't have to go back to war. He came back a Purple Heart recipient. . . . He wanted to go back to serve our Nation, with our soldiers.

Brigadier General Beasley also said that Andy "was a wonderful soldier and a brilliant patriot. He was someone who taught us a whole lot about wearing a uniform, about being a father, about being a husband, and about being an American."

Bret Howland was a good family friend and a father figure to Andy. He said the following about Andy's decision to return to Iraq:

He wanted to go with his people. He had this family, and he had his family with 983rd—[his Army battalion]. Everybody looked up to him, from the commander on down.

Bret also remembers how valuable Andy's friendship was. "He was on such an even keel," he said. "He was so calm in crisis, yet when he needed to be, he was fiercely loyal."

SFC James Gyori was Andy's platoon sergeant for 18 months. "Andy was the perfect soldier," he said. "He did what you asked. He always had a smile on his face. He was never in a bad mood—always there to help everybody. He got me through some rough days over there."

Andy's friends all love and miss him dearly. Daily, messages are left honoring him on Internet tribute Web sites. One friend from Anthony Wayne High School, Jen Stone, shared her memories of Andy on one of the sites:

As a fellow classmate of Andy's from Anthony Wayne High, I just want to say that he will truly be missed. I was friends with Andy only a short time, but he really touched my life. He was thoughtful, caring and just a great person all around. I pray that his family will be able to remember Andy through their memories and that his precious babies are taught what a special daddy they had for the short amount of time he was on this earth. I would like to thank him for serving and protecting our country above and beyond what was expected of him. I am so proud to have known him. I will be praying for his family.

Another of Andy's friends, Tony Stephans, wrote that he wears a Hero Bracelet to honor his friend. This is what he wrote:

I cherish the moments I get to spend with people explaining the meaning behind my Hero Bracelet memorializing the life of Andy. I proudly wear Andy's bracelet each and every day as a constant reminder to myself and everyone around me of the sacrifices

made by Andy and his family, as well as those like him, who stand in harms way so that each of us may enjoy [the] freedom and liberties we have. I will always keep Tiphany, Myles, Marlee, and all of Andy's family in my thoughts and prayers and pray that time will help to heal the feeling of loss you have all endured. Andy is still a hero and always will be.

Andy is also memorialized on the Wall of Heroes at Fort Snelling in Minnesota. The memorial features the etched faces of Army Reserve soldiers who have fallen while serving their country in Iraq. Andy's wife attended the unveiling of the memorial. During the occasion, she said that "my husband will always be honored. Every day I will honor him."

Andy's death has affected his entire community. Hundreds of mourners attended his memorial service to pay their respects. Family members carried Gerber daisies, a special flower to Andy and his wife, to place on his coffin. Many attendees also wore pink, because that had been Andy and Tiphany's color. Family friend Jackie Kidd-Lutzmann said the following about Andy: "He was the only guy who could wear pink and still looked macho. He was a very, very special young man."

At his funeral, numerous photographs from Andy's life were on display, and a particularly touching one adorned the front cover of the program. In it, Andy bends carefully over his daughter, Marlee, and together they are walking off into the distance.

It is a beautiful picture.

During the service, Andy's wife reflected upon the love she and Andy had shared. This is what she said:

I was going to write a letter, but I couldn't find the words. But, Andy taught me that actions speak louder than words. The biggest action he ever showed me was love. Because God gave Andy to me, I know what it is to be cherished.

Andy Eckert was a courageous young man—a model husband, father, son, and brother. He will always be remembered.

My wife Fran and I continue to keep his family and friends in our thoughts and prayers.

PRIVATE FIRST CLASS NICOLAS E. MESSMER

Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to Army PFC Nicolas E. Messmer from Gahanna, OH, who was killed when an explosive device detonated near his military vehicle in Iraq on May 8, 2005. He was just 20 years old.

He is survived by his parents Richard and Shirley Messmer, his four brothers Richard, Joseph, Dustin, and Zachary, his grandparents Ruth Ann Messmer, Martha and Clarence Lacey, and Donald Divers, and his high school sweetheart, to whom he was engaged to be married, Mary Murphy.

Nick—as family and friends called him—grew up in a very close and loving family. He was the middle child of five boys, and 1 of 70 grandchildren. Needless to say, he was extremely family-oriented—and someone with whom it was easy to get along. As his brother

Joe said, "Nick was [just] an awesome person. He was the nicest, friendliest, happiest kid you could ever know. He wouldn't hurt a fly."

Nick graduated from Gahanna Lincoln High School in 2003 and immediately joined the Army that summer. He didn't wait. He simply knew what he wanted to do—and that was to serve. As his brother, Joe, said, "He just went over there in [Iraq] to defend his country."

And Nick's father said, "Nick was the kind of soldier who makes this country great. He was just a great kid."

Nancy Dawson, Nick's high school guidance counselor, said she wasn't surprised when Nick joined the Army. She said the following in remembrance of Nick: "I hope they remember his heart, his enthusiasm for life, and just the neat kid that he was."

People were just drawn to Nick. They loved his warm and friendly personality. He was just an endearing, easy-going, nice guy. At Lincoln High, his death came as a great shock, and there was a moment of silence in his memory.

Nick had many friends who will miss him dearly. Internet tribute web pages are filled with messages from those whose lives he impacted. One of his friends, Kendra Hardrick, wrote the following:

Nick, I just wanted to tell you that I miss you and all the crazy times we had together when we were younger and use to sneak out. I miss the old group. I just wanted to say that you're my hero and always will be. There is not a day that goes by that I don't think of you. I wish you could be here, and we all miss you.

While Nick had many, many friends, the one person dearest to him was his fiancée Mary. She remembers Nick as someone who was "wonderful, funny, never angry and, always smiling." She said that he was very brave. I am very proud of him. His family loved him. We all did.

Mary remembers the last time she talked with Nick and how excited he was about serving his country. This, of course, is simply the kind of person Nick was—always optimistic, always looking to the future.

"We had so many plans," Mary recalls. She remembers how Nick sometimes wanted to buy a motorcycle, and sometimes wanted to buy a truck. "He wanted to be a firefighter," she said. "He wanted to be a cop. He wanted to have his own lawn-care service. He wanted to be so many things." Although we don't know what else in life he would have done, this much is certain—Nick Messmer was a brave and dedicated Marine, who gave his all in service to his country.

Those who knew Nick will never forget him. Upon his death, hundreds of friends, neighbors, and family members gathered at a memorial ceremony to pay their respects. From Gahanna Lincoln High School, alone, hundreds of students formed a line that wrapped all

the way around the school, symbolizing a wall of support for Nick and his family.

On an Internet tribute Web site, Nick's old health teacher from Gahanna Lincoln, Linda Shannon, wrote her sentiments about Nick. This is what she wrote:

To the Messmer Family—I want to express my deepest sympathy to your family on the loss of your son. We hope that the expression of honor and respect from the students at the high school as they lined the school's perimeter will, in some way, help you know that Nick's service to this country is greatly appreciated.

Nick's favorite color was orange. In his memory, utility poles along the streets were decorated with orange bows and his brothers placed orange roses on his casket. During calling hours, his family members wore orange ties.

At his funeral, Nick's pastor, Reverend Paul A. Noble, held back tears as he remembered the young man who gave his life for a cause he believed in. "In the midst of sadness," he said, "we are also filled with pride and thanksgiving."

Nick will never be forgotten by the community in which he grew up. Just last month, students at St. Matthew School in Gahanna honored Nick—along with another fallen Marine from Ohio, LCpl Ryan E. Miller. The school installed a "peace pole" and held a memorial prayer service. Both fallen Marines were St. Matthew church parishioners. The pole has the word "peace" inscribed on it in English, Spanish, Latin, Italian, German, and French. According to Principal Frances Michalec, there are 2,000 such poles throughout the world.

Brianna Ruth is an 8th grader at St. Matthew. Reflecting upon the meaning of the peace pole, she said that "it will be really nice for Nick and Ryan. Every time you drive by, you can remember them and what they did for our country."

I would like to conclude my remarks with a message left for Nick by his friend Nick Stephenson. He wrote the following to his friend:

There will never be enough that I could say, no matter how hard I try to describe it, bud. It's like you're now a missing link in my life. A part of me has truly left with you, Nick. Although you have so honorably departed from us to walk this cold world alone, I have gained so much from your passing. I remind myself daily of your awesome character and strive to look at life as you did—with total satisfaction of living freely with a courageous attitude toward life. I honestly believe that you not only live on in my heart, but your countrymen's hearts, as well. I salute you Nicolas E. Messmer, and look forward to that one fine day when I will see you again. My prayers are with you, Nick.

My wife Fran and I continue to keep the family of Army PFC Nicolas Messmer in our thoughts and in our prayers.

CORPORAL DANIEL FREEMAN

Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to an outstanding Ohioan—Army Cpl Daniel Freeman from Cincinnati. He was killed in a helicopter

crash on April 6, 2005, in Ghazni, Afghanistan. He was 20 years old.

Aboard a CH-47 Chinook helicopter with 14 other soldiers and three American contractors, Daniel was on a mission to deliver mail and supplies to the southern part of Afghanistan. He was bringing crucial aid to an area plagued by violence and insurgency. The day of the crash marked the deadliest day for the United States in Afghanistan since the fall of the Taliban.

Daniel took his time getting to Ohio, but it quickly became his home. Born in California, he then lived in Israel until he was 9 years old and his family moved to Cincinnati. Daniel grew up with a passion to serve in the military—and he certainly had the family pedigree. Both his mother Rebecca and his step-father Samuel had served in the military—she in the U.S. Air Force and he in the Israeli infantry. Samuel remembers that “Daniel wanted to be in the Army since he was 11 or 12 years old. You know how kids talk about it. But that was his main drive.”

Daniel was also committed to his faith. He was a member of the B’Nai Tzedek congregation in Kenwood and attended Yavneh Day School. Daniel’s faith shaped his commitment to helping others. It made him who he was.

As a student at Sycamore High School, Daniel jumped head first into a number of activities. He was a member of the rock climbing club, explorers club, and medics in training. He played soccer, enjoyed paintball, and had a part-time job busing tables at a local restaurant. Friends describe him as caring, sensitive, driven, and funny. As his high school counselor, Dr. Maria Sarasua said, “He was just a remarkable, easygoing [person]. He loved the outdoors, and he saw himself in a job being outdoors.” Daniel’s step-father added, “He liked music and the PlayStation. He was a teenager like any other teenager.”

But for all his normal teenage pursuits, Daniel still stood out. As his high school principal recalled:

I would characterize him as sort of an adventurous kind of a kid, and he had a passion for helping people. Early on, even as a junior, he had plans to involve himself in the military. It takes a special 18-year-old to sign up in these times.

Daniel’s step-father further explained Daniel’s desire to serve. This is what he said:

The main thing with my son is that he’s always had a strong sense of fairness and what is right and good. He truly believed in serving his country and thought everybody should do it to give back in some way.

Daniel took advantage of an Army program that allowed him to enlist a year before he finished high school. After graduating from Sycamore High in 2003, he immediately began basic training. He went through airborne school at Fort Benning, GA, and was assigned to the Red Devils—the 173rd Airborne Brigade’s 1st Battalion, 508th Infantry Regiment, stationed at Camp Ederle, Italy.

As a member of the Red Devils, Daniel served four months in Iraq before beginning his service in Afghanistan. Daniel’s passion and enthusiasm for his work translated into much success. Jack Kilbride, commander of the battalion’s headquarters company, recalls that “no matter how mundane, how menial, or how difficult the task, Corporal Freeman accomplished it with a smile.”

Daniel Freeman was selfless. He volunteered to replace one of the soldiers who was supposed to be aboard that helicopter on the day that he died. Daniel’s comrade had been working without sleep and needed relief. Daniel was there to give it. This is simply what he had always done.

Friends and family remember Daniel and celebrate his life. Staff members at Sycamore High wore American flag ties and U.S. Army lanyards to remember Daniel. When he died, school officials at Sycamore lowered the flag to halfstaff for Daniel, and the school observed a moment of silence before classes began. Daniel’s picture is still displayed in a case that honors former students serving in the military.

Daniel’s former English teacher, Liz Gonda, captured the sentiments of so many, saying simply, “He knew what he wanted to do in life. He made a difference in the world by his presence and will be greatly missed.”

Funeral services were held on April 20, 2005, in Cincinnati. Shiva was observed in his family’s home. Daniel’s mother planned on taking her son’s ashes to Israel, where they would be returned to the earth for all time. Additionally, a memorial fund has been set up in Daniel’s name, as his family has said, “we want to celebrate his life more than mourn it.”

Daniel’s mother was kind enough to share with me one of her email exchanges with her son as he arrived in Afghanistan in February. In his email, Daniel talked about some of the lessons he had learned in the Army and how much he had grown. This is what he wrote:

I’ve learned that my mind can be my [ally] as well as my enemy, and I’m constantly fighting it . . . you’ll be amazed at how your mind will set limits, but how far your body will go.

Daniel goes on to explain to his mother his reasons for serving:

We don’t fight for glory, we fight for those men, whom we’ve bonded with, spent countless hours with, and suffered with. I fight for them, for their wives, for their parents. My biggest fear is not my death, it’s the death of those whose parents and wives I’ll have to see suffer. That’s why I fight, that’s what makes me a soldier, that’s why I don’t question why I go to war. I accept it, clear my head, and get my priorities straight. I want you to know that I love you and will see you in a year from now.

Daniel Freeman was a very insightful, thoughtful young man. He understood the simple, but powerful truths of love and service to others. He will never be forgotten.

My wife Fran and I keep all of Daniel’s family and friends in our prayers.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ALLEN). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Ohio is recognized.

Mr. DEWINE. I thank the Chair. And I thank the Chair for his patience.

SERGEANT JUSTIN HOFFMAN

Mr. President, I rise this evening to pay tribute to a fellow Ohioan—Marine Sgt Justin Hoffman from Delaware. On August 3, 2005, Sergeant Hoffman died when a roadside bomb detonated under his military vehicle in Iraq. He was serving with Lima Company, 3rd Battalion, 25th Marine Regiment. Sergeant Hoffman leaves his father Robert, mother and step-father Carole and Chuck and younger brothers Tyler and Travis. Justin was 27 year old at the time of his death.

Growing up, Justin’s father remembers that his son came to love motorcycles, cars, and anything competitive. He was smart, funny, and dedicated.

His friends and loved ones remember that he had one of the biggest hearts they had ever known. His smile and laughter will always be remembered. He was fun loving, but would also jump to be there for anyone who needed him.

Those who knew Justin remember that he loved to talk about pretty much anything—whether it was politics, cars, women, or his personal dedication to serving his country. And that is something that everyone remembers about Justin Hoffman—he was always proud to be serving our Nation in the Marines Corps.

Justin graduated from Worthington Christian High School in 1995 and then attended the Ohio State University. Before his junior year of college, he had joined the Marine Reserves. Justin’s father had also served in the Marines and remembers how proud he was of his son’s decision.

Justin’s mother Carole recalls that he joined the Marines not only because he wanted to follow family tradition, but because he had “wanted some discipline in his life.” She said that she saw a change in Justin after he completed his military training as a marine sharpshooter.

“He was a good Marine,” she said.

After graduating from Ohio State, Justin began working with information systems at Cardinal Health Center in Columbus. His dad recalls that his son’s intelligence qualified him for the job, but that he was also big and strong and needed an outlet for his excess energy. Karen DePoy worked with Justin at Cardinal Health Center and remembers how smart he was. She wrote the following message on an Internet tribute Web site:

It seems like just yesterday that I was getting this super sharp intern to work with. What a terrific young kid, I thought, as we



discussed everything from personal investments to keeping the faith during rough times.

Josh Busic also worked with Justin. This is what he wrote about his friend:

He was one of the reasons I looked forward to coming into work every day. There was never a boring day with him at work. Whether it was one of his stories of someone he raced in his car, some [silly] clip on the Internet he wanted all of us to see, some argument on politics (there were a lot of those) . . . him telling a story about one his brothers (whom he talked about quite a bit), or just him ragging on us about something that only he would think of—Justin was a good friend and my only regret is that I didn't know him longer than I did.

More than anything, Justin was a dedicated person. He was dedicated to his family, his job, and his marines. After 7 years of serving in the Reserves, he re-enlisted in 2004. His mother remembers that Justin's reason for re-enlisting was because of the men he trained with. "He wanted to be their leader," she said.

Justin brother Tyler echoed these sentiments, when he said that "Justin told me that he couldn't let them—[his Marines]—go alone because he loved his men so much. He considered his whole squad to be brothers.

Justin loved his fellow marines, and he loved his family. He was exceptionally close to his brothers, Tyler and Travis. Their parents would never let them fight while growing up, and Tyler remembers how protective Justin was of him. In Tyler words, Justin was a great brother, and more than that, he was a great friend.

Justin's brother Travis remembers that the three of them were "inseparable." Justin was the best man in his wedding. It is a memory he will always cherish. He remembers that his brother could always make him laugh.

During his 27 years, Justin had also found the love of his life—his girlfriend, Teri Price. The two planned to get married one day, and Teri remembers that Justin would tease her about proposing as soon as he stepped off the plane on his way back from Iraq.

Teri recalls how much she loved Justin's smile and how "he could always make me laugh and [how] he was always joking. I loved him more than anything."

Teri—who knew Justin as "Fen," short for his middle name of Fenton—left him the following message on the Internet tribute website:

Fen, there aren't words deep enough to express how I feel about you. I love you more than anything and was looking forward to spending the rest of our lives together. You are the most generous, selfless, kind, amazing, funny, thoughtful person I know. I am so proud of you, and I am honored to have been a part of your life. You made every day a happier day.

Family was so important to Justin. While in Iraq, he always kept in contact with his mother. He would e-mail, write, and call on a regular basis. His mom Carole remembers how Justin always wanted to hear about how things

were at home. "Justin loved Eagle Pizza and wanted to hear about the tree that needed uprooting in the yard," she said. "Justin just spoke the truth."

Justin's father remembers the last conversation he had with his son. It was after Justin's close friend—fellow Ohio Marine Cpl Andre Williams—had been killed in Iraq. Justin reassured his father that there was nothing he needed, and then said good-bye with the following words: I love you, Dad.

Mr. President, Marine Sgt Justin Hoffman lived a life that was honorable and heroic. He was a devoted son, brother, and boyfriend. Everyday, he is dearly missed by his family, friends, and loved ones.

My wife Fran and I will continue to keep his family in our thoughts and in our prayers.

LANCE CORPORAL BRYAN N. TAYLOR

Mr. President, this evening, I rise to pay tribute to a brave marine from Milford, OH. LCpl Bryan Taylor, who was killed in Iraq on April 6, 2006, after he had been there for just 5 weeks. Bryan is survived by his parents Rick and Sherri Taylor, and his younger brother Matthew. He was just 20 years old at the time of his death.

A 2004 graduate of Milford High School, Bryan had a strong interest in computers and technology. He also attended Live Oaks Career Development Center, where he studied computer-assisted drafting during his last 2 years of high school. According to those close to him, Bryan "knew no strangers and had no enemies." One of his favorite things to do was simply sit around and talk about good memories with his friends.

While reflecting on their memories of Bryan, his friends stressed his unceasing loyalty. Bryan's friend John Legleu said that "people who didn't even know Bryan that well are calling to tell me what he meant to them. He had a way of finding things in common, and he always found the good in people."

Friend Stacey Flick, added:

Bryan strived to make sure he was there for his friends no matter what.

In fact, friends say it was the camaraderie of the Marine Corps that led Bryan to enlist.

As his friend James Wallace said:

Bryan was pretty much everything you want in a friend. . . . He had such a big influence on the people he knew.

Those who knew Bryan also remember his compassion and his willingness to listen. As his friend John said:

I would always seek advice from [Bryan]. Even though I was older, I would always get his opinion. He was mature beyond his years.

Bruce Wallace, the father of Bryan's best friend James, shared the following story about Bryan. This is what he said:

I'd come home from work and Bryan would be sitting in the living room, watching TV alone, waiting for Jamie. I'd ask him if he was hungry. He'd say, 'No, I already ate,' and I'd go into the kitchen and see an empty cereal bowl in the sink! He was the only person

who could get away with this because he was truly my second son. He wasn't like any of us. He was so exceptional.

After enlisting in 2005, Bryan quickly made friends among his fellow marines. PVT Adam Michaels met Bryan during their training and shared this story about him:

Bryan was a great guy, and we had a lot of good times. I hung out with him before he left [for Iraq], and he always had a great presence. I remember watching Bengals games with him even though I am a huge Packers fan! He was as great as they come.

Bryan lived life fully and left a lasting impression on his friends, family, and community. After his death, Miami Township named the football field at Miami Meadows Park, where Bryan used to played Pee Wee football, in his honor.

Additionally, Clermont County held a "Celebration of Life" in tribute to Bryan. This celebration included a balloon launch of 60 red, white, and blue balloons, each filled with a note from Bryan's family and friends. Bryan's family also received an outpouring of support from many other families of fallen servicemembers, which has meant so very much to them.

In talking about the loss of servicemembers, GEN George S. Patton—who I know is a favorite of the Presiding Officer—once said that we should not mourn those who die on the field of battle. "Rather," he said, "we should thank God that such men lived."

Indeed, Mr. President, while we mourn, we do thank God that Bryan Taylor lived. He was a good son, brother, friend, and marine. Everyone who knew him loved him.

In December 2005, Bryan visited his old high school dressed in his marine uniform. He came to say goodbye to his former teachers before leaving to serve in Iraq. According to those at the high school, he was very proud to be a marine and visited frequently to keep in touch with his favorite teachers. Milford High School Assistant Principal Mark Lutz shared the following story about his final visit with Bryan:

Bryan had a young person's bravado. . . . Bryan was an excellent young man. He was always looking for a new challenge. . . . I think the Marines gave him a sense of direction.

Assistant Principal Lutz also remembers the pride with which Bryan served. This is what he said:

Bryan was very proud of his decision to serve in the Marines, which he credited with giving him direction and helping him become an adult. He was looking forward to returning to his unit to prepare for his tour of duty in Iraq.

In describing his role in the military, Bryan, himself, wrote the following paragraph shortly before he died:

I am a Marine. . . . I am proud of what I do and to serve the country that I do. We are here for you and your families. We are the ones who are willing to give our lives to make your life easier and safer. . . . I have seen a lot of good men lose their lives because of what our beliefs are. I honor these men every day.

Indeed, Mr. President, we all must honor these brave souls—and Marine LCpl Bryan Taylor is one of them. He will be remembered as a wonderful young man, a loyal friend, and a proud marine. My wife Fran and I continue to keep his family in our thoughts and in our prayers.

STAFF SERGEANT JASON A. BENFORD

Mr. President, this evening, I rise to honor the life of Army SSG Jason A. Benford from Toledo, OH. On September 27, 2005, SSG Benford died when insurgents attacked his patrol with small-arms fire in Ramadi, Iraq. He was 30 years of age at the time.

Staff Sergeant Benford was a devoted family man—the husband of Kimberly and the father of two young sons, Lane and Jacob. He is also survived by his parents George and Linda Benford, his sisters Kimberly and Lori, his brother John, his grandparents Robert and Deloris, and numerous nieces and nephews.

Jason truly was an excellent serviceman—the epitome of what a professional soldier should be. He was also a man who cared deeply for family and friends. His personal integrity and his devotion to duty were unmatched, and he consistently set high standards for himself.

Jason was born on June 8, 1975. A 1993 graduate of Bowsher High School, he attended the University of Toledo before enlisting in the Army in 1994. He originally enlisted for 3 years, as a “learning and growing” experience. But it turned out that the Army was Jason’s true calling, and he re-enlisted once his initial service was complete. According to his step-mother, Jason was planning to make the Army his career.

After graduating from Basic and Advanced Individual Training, Jason served in the Republic of Korea before being assigned to Fort Benning, GA, where he served as team leader and senior gunner. In Georgia, Jason found more to keep him busy than simply being an excellent soldier. It was at this time that he met and married Kimberly, the love of his life, whose hometown was near Fort Benning.

“My mother had told me not to date soldiers,” Kim remembers. “But I did—and I married him.” Shortly after being married in January 1998, Jason was transferred to Vilseck, Germany, where he and Kim remained for 3 years before returning to Georgia.

Jason loved his wife dearly, but he also loved his Ohio State University football, and on January 3, 2003, which was both his wedding anniversary and the night of the Buckeyes’ legendary NCAA championship game against Miami, he had to make a choice. The decision, however, was easy. Lucky for him, Kim ate quickly, and the game went into overtime. “He took me out to dinner,” Kim laughed, “but he was looking at his watch the whole time. He lived in Georgia, but he was always a Buckeye.”

In July 2005, Jason was able to spend Independence Day with his family

while on a 2-week leave. It was a time in which many memories were made. “We spent time in Panama City, went to a Braves game in Atlanta, and had fun at Whitewater,” Kim remembers. “It was a great time to be together—just the family.”

Kim remembers that her husband was a calm, even-tempered man who did not easily lose his cool. “He’s always been a special, special person, so even-toned,” she said. “He’d handle all types of situations and not even break a sweat. That was one of the things we appreciated so much, [and] I know the soldiers did too.”

Those who served with Jason also remember his calm demeanor and his optimistic nature. CPT Brian Mehan left his friend the following message on an Internet tribute website in memory of Jason:

Staff Sergeant Benford and I served together. His levity and friendly demeanor made even the hard times more bearable. The world will be a lesser place without him.

Those who knew Jason have rallied around his family in support. Stacey Jarzebowski, from Toledo, left his parents and family the following message on that Internet tribute website:

I am so sorry to hear of your loss. My sisters (Becky & Kim) and I were childhood friends of John and Jason. I can remember how full of life [they] were together. I’m sorry that he was taken from you.

Nothing was more important to Jason than his family, and he talked to Kim as often as possible while in Iraq. According to the Kim, they sent instant messages to each other twice a day and talked on the phone regularly while he was stationed there. After he was sent to Ramadi, however, Jason was only able to call once—the day before he died.

Jason was completing his second tour of duty in Iraq when he was killed. His service to our Nation earned him more medals than I can name here, but they include the Bronze Star Medal, the Purple Heart, the Army Commendation Medal, (1 Oak Leaf Cluster), and the Army Achievement Medal, (6 Oak Leaf Clusters).

Mr. President and Members of the Senate, Army SSG Jason Benford was devoted both to the Army and to his country. But most importantly, Jason was a loving husband, father, and son—someone for whom family came first. He loved simply spending time with his family, and sharing his love of sports with his two sons.

Mr. President, my wife Fran and I will continue to keep Jason and his family in our thoughts and in our prayers.

LANCE CORPORAL DUSTIN ROBERT FITZGERALD

Mr. President, I rise tonight to pay tribute to Marine LCpl Dustin Robert Fitzgerald from Huber Heights, OH. On August 18, 2004, Lance Corporal Fitzgerald was killed in a vehicle accident in the Al Anbar Province of Iraq. He was 22 years old. He is survived by his parents Michael and Melody Fitzgerald, and his brothers Brandon and Shannon.

Ever since he was a small boy, Dusty—as he was known by family and friends—knew that he wanted to serve his country and help his fellow citizens. While attending Wayne High School, he enrolled in the school’s Junior ROTC program.

Initially, Dusty wanted to be a pilot in the Air Force. However, he came home one day and told his mother that he instead wanted to be a marine. At such a young age, Dusty knew exactly what he wanted to do. He was determined and took steps to pursue his dream.

Dusty simply loved ROTC. “He gave his all,” his mother recalled. “He enjoyed it so much and took it very seriously.” Dusty participated in the Junior ROTC program for 3 years.

During this time, Dusty made many friends. The other young students in Junior ROTC respected him and enjoyed his company. They found him to be sincere person—someone with a good sense of humor. One of Dusty’s many friends, Brenna Downs, wrote the following in a posting on an Internet tribute to Dusty:

When I heard about what happened to Dusty, I was immediately taken back to junior high and early high school, when he used to hang out with all of us. He definitely stood out in our group with his sense of humor. He was genuine. Years after I knew him, I still remember how he made us all laugh. He was a good guy and will be remembered and missed by his old friends.

Dusty and his friends enjoyed baseball, basketball and wrestling while they were in high school. Dusty’s friends were drawn to him for the same reasons his peers at Junior ROTC were drawn to him. His mother said that Dusty “was very adventurous. [He had a] wonderful sense of humor. [He was] easy-going. He never had an enemy.”

In addition to sports, Dusty was crazy for cars. “When Dustin wasn’t fighting in wars, he loved souping up cars,” his mother recalled. In high school, Dustin fixed up a 1996 Dodge Stratus, outfitting it with racing tires and a spoiler. And just 4 months before he entered the Marines, he bought his dream car—a 1997 Mitsubishi Eclipse. He spent hours fixing it up. While he was stationed in the Middle East, Dusty would ask his mother to buy car accessories so he would have them when he got home.

After graduating from Wayne High School in 2000, Dusty began taking steps to fulfill his dream of becoming a marine. When he left for boot camp, his family was extraordinarily proud of him. Melody said of her son, “Dusty was proud, too. You [could] look into his eyes and see his pride.”

After boot camp, Dusty’s life moved quickly. He was assigned to Battalion Landing Team 1-2 with the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit out of Camp Lejeune, NC. In January 2003, Dusty and his unit headed overseas on the U.S.S. Gunston Hall. His family missed him tremendously, but they knew he was doing the right thing—that he was doing what he believed in.



Dusty was dearly loved and respected by all. SSG B. Coomer said that being a marine was in Dustin's blood even before he enlisted. He left Dustin's family the following message on the Internet tribute Web site:

I am terribly sorry to hear about Dusty. We graduated the same year, and we were in Sea Cadets together. At the time, I was the Cadet leader when I met him. He was a Marine long before he entered Marine basic training.

I know that he was one of the most well disciplined cadets in our unit. He always listened very well and took whatever task we had to accomplish very seriously whether it was Kung Fu training, drill, or running the obstacle course. He loved the movie, 'Full Metal Jacket' and often, we would joke around with him telling him that he looked like the main character. He would quietly laugh and [imitate that] character.

I am thankful to have known him and to have served with him. As I have said, he was a Marine long before he ever entered basic training, and he will never be forgotten as a friend, Marine, and fellow Sea Cadet.

During a memorial service in Dusty's honor, family, friends and neighbors all gathered to pay their respects. They released blue balloons in his honor.

Dusty be remembered by everyone he met. Christina Benn, who met Dusty in North Carolina, recalls her first meeting with him. This is what she said:

My daughters Alyssa and Lauren and I reside in Greenville, North Carolina, where I had the pleasure of meeting . . . Dustin. He was a very loving and compassionate Marine, who came into our lives and brought us happiness. Our hearts go out to the Fitzgerald family for life. We will keep you and your precious loving son in our prayers, and may God help guide you through these trying times.

The world is a better place since Marine LCpl Dustin Fitzgerald has been in it. He had a glowing smile, a fine sense of humor, a big heart, and a tremendous sense of dedication to his family, community, and country.

My wife Fran and I continue to keep Dustin's family in our thoughts and in our prayers.

SERGEANT JAMES WORSTER

Mr. President, I rise tonight to remember a fallen servicemember—SGT James Worster, from Broadview Heights, OH. Sergeant Worster was serving as a medic with the Army's 10th Combat Support Hospital in Baghdad, when he died of cardiac arrest on September 18, 2006. He is survived by his wife Brandy, his young son Trevor, his mother and stepfather Donna and Burleigh Thornton, his brothers Jack and Josh, and his sister Joy. He was just 24 years old.

James Worster was a dedicated and compassionate young man who responded to a pair of tragic events by finding a way to serve his country and help those in need. After his father Richard died from a medical condition in 2000, James was inspired to become a doctor. He simply decided that he wanted to help others.

One year later, James was studying at Cleveland State University when the terrorists attacked the United States

on September 11, 2001. The attacks had a profound impact on James and compelled him to enlist in the Army. He had a strong desire to help prevent other such attacks from happening on our homeland. By becoming a medic in the Army, he was able to both honor his father and serve our Nation.

James was born in Fargo, ND, on March 30, 1982. He moved to Alaska when he was 7 and attended middle school and high school in the city of North Pole. Those who knew James describe him as a very focused student, who had a great work ethic. MAJ Jim Alonzo, who guided James through his high school Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps program, called him "a shining star" who was "always there."

These were the very words Major Alonzo used when recommending James for an internship with the National Park Service after James's sophomore year of high school. Although the Park Service told Major Alonzo that they normally didn't hire interns as young as James, he was selected and spent the summers after his sophomore and junior years of high school working at Yellowstone National Park. This is the kind of impressive young man he was.

While serving in the ROTC program in high school, James met Brandy Kusinski. He fell in love. After graduating from North Pole High School in 2000, James joined Brandy, then his fiancée, at Cleveland State University. The two were married on October 13, 2002, and they celebrated the birth of their son Trevor 2 years later.

James felt a strong bond with children, both here at home and in Iraq. According to his mother, James's son Trevor "was the light of his life." Donna said that her son "hoped someday the country would be safe for his son and all people's [children]."

This caring nature was evident in James's work at the 10th Combat Support Hospital in Baghdad, where he treated children who had been shot. His mother Donna said, "He was glad he was there for them, and he was glad he was there for his soldiers."

James's work with soldiers and civilians, especially children, served as practice for what he hoped would be a medical career when he returned from Iraq. In Iraq, he performed a range of procedures that would prepare him procedures ranging from setting bones to even delivering babies.

Those who met James were always impressed by his compassion and consideration. Cesar Gonzalez served in the 10th Combat Support Hospital alongside James. According to Cesar, James was one of the kindest persons in the hospital. He said that James would always ask him how he was doing and that he would always put the needs of others above his own. As James's mother said, he just "loved people, and he [in turn] was loved by a lot of people."

James's family remembers him as someone who cared deeply about others

and pursued his dreams with a smile on his face. In a written statement, his family spoke of this compassion and desire to help those around him. This is what they wrote:

[James] had a very strong faith in God and a very strong love of country. James lived life to the fullest, raising his son and being a wonderful son, himself. Pursuing his dreams took him to the Army, where he learned to save lives and truly believed he was making a difference. His beautiful smile and endearing personality brightened any day, and . . . he was a beacon of light and will forever be remembered and loved.

While on leave, James was active in the Mustang Club in Colorado, an organization devoted to the preservation and appreciation of Mustang cars. James not only appreciated classic cars, he loved to race them.

It was through racing that James met many friends, including Brandy from Colorado. According to Brandy, racing on the track simply isn't the same without James. She wrote the following on an Internet tribute Web site in James's memory:

He was one of the greatest people I've ever met. I'm sorry for all those who didn't have a chance to meet him. He brought so much to everyone he met. It was just amazing to see someone with that much compassion and heart.

Also posted on that same Internet tribute website, is a message from Vicki Gleisner, whom James knew as "Aunt Vicki." This is what she wrote:

From the first day I met James, I knew he was a very confident, gentle young man. Even though I think he was only 5 at the time, he wasn't a little boy. He was always protecting his mom. I guess that when he was satisfied that his mom was taken care of, he decided to take care of the rest of us. James always had a very respectful way about him, and he always made me feel important. Thank you for letting me be a part of your life, James, and for leaving your smile in my heart, so I can remember your gentleness.

James was a young man who truly understood the importance of service to others—his family, his friends, and our Nation. He was a devoted husband, father, son, and brother. His life was one filled with, and he made a positive impact on everyone whom he met. My wife Fran and I will continue to keep SGT James Worster's family and friends in our thoughts and prayers.

CAPTAIN TYLER SWISHER

Mr. President, I rise tonight to honor and to remember a fellow Ohioan—Marine Captain Tyler B. Swisher from Cincinnati, OH. On October 21, 2005, CPT Swisher was killed when his vehicle was struck by an improvised explosive device while conducting combat operations against enemy forces in Iraq. He was 35 years old.

Tyler was the type of person who simply never gave up. He always sought out new challenges. At the time of his death, he was serving his third tour of duty in Iraq—and was looking forward to serving two more. This is typical of his dedication and determination to succeed.

In high school, Tyler proved himself academically, by spending hours studying his books and lessons. His hard work paid off, when he made the honor roll during his senior year—an accomplishment for which he was very proud. After high school, Tyler went on to Butler University, where he graduated with a degree in biology in 1993.

And then, Tyler set his sights on the Marines. A longtime friend of the Swisher family, Jack Buckholz, remembers that Tyler attacked the challenges of boot camp with the same ferocity and determination that he had displayed with everything he did. He spent 6 months training on his own to make sure he was prepared. He ran several miles a day and worked construction to strengthen his muscles. "He had a rope that he would climb every day," Jack Buchholz remembers. "After that, boot camp was not so bad [at all]."

Tyler entered the Marines as an enlisted man and then worked his way up to Officer's Commission in 1997 and eventually became on to being a company commander for the 2nd Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment, based in Camp Lejeune, NC. When he died in Iraq, 200 Marines were under his command.

Tyler died doing what all Marine officers aspire to do—[and that is] lead Marines in combat," said Captain Gary McCullar, one of Tyler's best friends. "Tyler never faltered. Tyler did it right.

Tyler sought out challenges that most people would shy away from—challenges like training for mountain warfare in Korea, which involved steep climbing, rocky slopes, and living outdoors in harsh elements. "It was miserable," Captain McCullar remembered. "[And,] he loved it."

Tyler always pushed himself beyond all expectations and always gave his best—whether it was for himself, his school, or his country.

Tyler was a dedicated and hard-working Marine, but he was also a selfless person, who always placed the needs of family, friends, Marines, and Nation above his own. But, most important to him were his wife Stephanie and their three children: Ashleigh, Madison, and Jacob. Stephanie's brother Peter Lynch remembers that Tyler was a devoted father and a committed husband. For Stephanie, he was consistently a source of strength. No matter how bad a day she was having, he was always able to get a burst of laughter out of her.

And Tyler's daughter Ashleigh left him the following message on an Internet tribute Web site:

Tyler Swisher, my Dad, was an amazing man. He was more than a Dad to me . . . he was my hero. He gave me the strength to face many hardships in my life, and he was always there for me. He was the best father anybody could ask for. He's my inspiration everyday to live life. . . . I will never stop missing him. I'm so proud of you Daddy, thanks so much for being my hero, and protecting us all. With love, Ashleigh.

Todd Smith was one of Tyler's childhood buddies. At Tyler's funeral, he ad-

ressed the following words to his friend:

I remember sitting in the [movie theater], watching 'The Empire Strikes Back' all day long. You were always there for me more than I was there for you. I could count on you to tell me right from wrong. I could count on you to stick up for me, and you taught me to stick up for myself. I've always looked up to you and can't begin to say how proud I am of you. You made the ultimate sacrifice for your country, and you are truly a hero. I am lucky and blessed you were part of my life.

Tyler's fellow Marines in Iraq felt the same respect and admiration for Tyler as his family and friends did back home. Doug Miorandi from Phoenix, AZ, expressed his respect for his friend and fellow serviceman on an Internet tribute Web site. This is what he wrote:

I was fortunate enough to have served with Tyler and feel honored to call him my friend. Tyler and I were roommates for over two years, serving at both Marine Barracks Washington, D.C., and the Presidential Retreat at Camp David. From being a 'spit and polished' Presidential Security Guard to a hard charging Marine grunt, Tyler epitomized the word 'Marine.' I'll never forget our time together, and I feel fortunate to have been a part of your life.

CPT Tyler Swisher was buried a hero at Arlington National Cemetery, and I am honored that I had the opportunity to attend the funeral services in Ohio for this fine marine. The streets were lined with family, friends and fellow servicemen and women who had come to honor him. Everyone I spoke to that sunny November day had the same thing to say—Tyler Swisher had loved being a marine, and he loved what he was doing.

I would like to conclude with the words of Tyler's dear friend, CPT Gary McCullar, who was Tyler's military escort on his final journey home. In a letter to the Cincinnati Post thanking the community and citizens for the respect and honor they showed to Tyler and his family, he wrote the following:

Captain Swisher epitomized the meaning of the Marines. He was a leader, he was tough, he was the best that this country has to offer, but most importantly he was a man who loved his wife and children and enjoyed spending every minute he could with them. Captain Swisher was also the best friend I ever had. I am very proud of how the City honored my friend.

Indeed the world is a better place because of Tyler Swisher. My wife Fran and I will continue to keep his family—his wife Stephanie and their three children Ashleigh, Madison, and Jacob, his parents David and Mary Beth Swisher, and his siblings John and Sara—in our thoughts and in our prayers.

I thank the Chair very much this evening. I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

## HONORING SENATORIAL SERVICE

BILL FRIST

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, it is with great pleasure that today I honor our distinguished majority leader, Senator BILL FRIST. After serving with BILL for the last 12 years, I have come to know that he is a fine leader, an accomplished physician and a wonderful person. He is a man of compassion and conviction who has served our Country and this body well.

It is only fitting that the majority leader of the U.S. Senate be a person who has dedicated his life to serving others.

We all know of BILL's remarkable service to people around the world as a transplant surgeon for over 20 years. We have applauded him on several occasions as he has embarked on pilgrimages to help bring needed medical expertise to impoverished countries. We have seen him fight to secure over \$15 billion in Federal funding to fight the spread of HIV/AIDS in Africa. We have marveled at his dedication to serving the people of Tennessee. And time and again, we have witnessed him here on the floor of the U.S. Senate in the middle of the night conducting the people's business and ensuring the legacy of the Senate continues in the most professional manner.

I hope everyone understands what a sacrifice it is to take on leadership duties here in Washington. The Federal Government never sleeps. When elected representatives come to Washington, they bring with them the hopes, dreams, and aspirations of each one of their constituents. Those who take this responsibility seriously spend every waking moment addressing concerns and working for the people they represent. That is quite a responsibility to bear. When you add to that responsibility the duties of being a leader and looking out for the interests of those you lead, the duties are immense and the sleepless nights really start to mount. I, for one, am grateful for BILL's exemplary service and willingness to spend his life looking out for the interests of others.

Over the last 4 years, as BILL has been majority leader, I have had several occasions to seek him out and ask for his advice and counsel. In every instance, he has made himself available. There have been times when I have been working on issues of great importance to the citizens of Utah until 1, 2, or even 3 in the morning and, even though the items we were working on did not impact BILL or his constituents, he and his staff were gracious enough to stay up and work with me. For that I am grateful.

As a highly trained physician, BILL has changed the way the Senate approaches health care policy. As a member of the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee and the Senate Finance Committee, two committees with jurisdiction over health care issues, BILL has used his insight and training to shape and move